

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-23 are pending.

Claims 9-15 are allowed.

Claims 1-6, 16, 22 and 23 are rejected.

Claims 7, 8 and 17-21 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 7 and 17 have been canceled.

Claims 1, 5, 16 and 18 have been amended.

The applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 9-15 are allowed and that claims 7, 8 and 17-21 contain allowable subject matter. After the entry of the amendments presented herein, claims 1-6, 8-16, and 18-23 remain pending.

II. Amendments to Claims

In response to the rejections and the objections raised by the Examiner in the Office Action, the Applicants amended the claims as follows:

(1) Claims 1 and 7: The Examiner rejected independent claim 1, however, the Examiner also noted that claim 7, depending from claim 1, would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In response, claim 7 has been canceled and claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 7. Thus, amended claim 1 is believed to be in allowable form.

(2) Claims 2-6, and 8: These claims depend from amended claim 1, which is allowable. Thus, dependent claims 2-6, and 8 are also allowable.

(3) Claims 16 and 17: The Examiner rejected independent claim 16, however, the Examiner also noted that claim 17, depending from claim 16, would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In response, claim 17 has been canceled and claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 17. Thus, amended claim 16 is believed to be in allowable form.

(4) Claims 18-23: These claims depend from amended claim 16, which is allowable. Thus, dependent claims 18-23 are also allowable.

III. CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that all outstanding issues have been addressed herein and the pending claims 1-6, 8-16, and 18-23 are in condition for allowance. No fee is believed due for the submission of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,



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